

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-05 ACDA-19

NIC-01 DRC-01 /156 W

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R 031510Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4271

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 13214

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, CH

SUBJECT: SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

REF: A. NEW DELHI 12209 (OCTOBER 19, 1973)

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B. NEW DELHI 5756

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: GOI HOPES FOR IMPROVING SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS HAVE BEEN SET BACK BY THE PRC'S REACTION TO THE SIKKIM DEVELOPMENTS. THE CHINESE REACTION HAS ALSO DEEPENED INDIAN SUSPICIONS ABOUT CHINA'S REAL INTENTIONS ALONG THE COUNTRY'S BORDERS. SOVIET PROPAGANDA IN INDIA CONTINUES TO SEEK TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN THE TWO ASIAN NEIGHBORS. WHILE SOME GOI OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE PRC WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO AN IMPROVED IMAGE OF INDIA IN THE WEST, THE PROSPECTS FOR ANY SUCH EARLY IMPROVEMENT ARE LESS PROMISING NOW THAN A YEAR AGO. END SUMMARY.

2. THE GOI HAS HAD NO ILLUSIONS IN RECENT YEARS ABOUT ACCOMPLISHING RAPID CHANGES IN SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS. OVER THE LAST 18 MONTHS INDIAN POLICY HAS ACCORDINGLY BEEN DIRECTED TOWARD ESTABLISHING A CLIMATE IN WHICH NORMALIZATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS (MEANING AN EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS) COULD BE TAKEN AT THE RIGHT MOMENT. OFFICIALS HERE POINT TO A SUCCESSION OF SIGNALS LAUNCHED FROM NEW DELHI BEGINNING IN MID-1973 TO WHICH THEY FEEL THE PRC HAS NOT APPROPRIATELY RESPONDED. THESE INCLUDE THE EASING OF TRANSIT VISA FACILITIES FOR PRC CITIZENS, A RELAXATION OF OVERT SECURITY SURVEILLANCE OF THE CHINESE EMBASSY, PERMISSION FOR CHINESE DIPLOMATS TO TRAVEL MORE WIDELY IN INDIA, AND PUBLIC HINTS THAT THE GOI WAS WILLING TO RESUME TRADE RELATIONS. IN A SPEECH AT HYDERABAD AUGUST 18, WELL BEFORE THE SIKKIM FURORE, FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH ACKNOWLEDGED THE GOVERNMENT'S SENSE OF FRUSTRATION. HE SAID THE INDIAN WANTED TO IMPROVE RELATIONS AND HAD MADE CERTAIN SUGGESTIONS, BUT "IT REQUIRES TWO TO STRENGTHEN FRIENDSHIP. . . WE HOPE CHINA RESPONDS TO OUR MOVES." WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF POSTING AN AMBASSADOR TO PEKING IN PARLIAMENT IN MID-AUGUST, HE PROMISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD KEEP "AN OPEN MIND" ON THE QUESTION BUT SUCH A POSTING WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT THE "APPROPRIATE TIME."

3. THE CHINESE HINTED AT SOME CAUTIOUS POSITIVE REACTION TO THESE SIGNALS BY INVITING A GROUP OF INDIANS TO ATTEND A MEMORIAL CELEBRATION LAST SPRING FOR AN INDIAN DOCTOR ACTIVE DURING THE CHINESE CIVIL WAR ON THE COMMUNIST SIDE. THEY ALSO ANNOUNCED THEY WOULD SEND A PING-PONG TEAM TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL
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MEET IN CALCUTTA EARLY IN 1975. WHAT LITTLE MIGHT HAVE BEEN READ FROM THOSE VAGUE VAPORS WAS APPARENTLY BLOWN AWAY BY THE CHINESE REACTION TO INDIAN MOVES IN SIKKIM DURING THE LAST SUMMER.

4. THE GOI HAS BEEN TAKEN ABACK BY THE PRC'S SHARP REACTION TO ITS ACTION MAKING SIKKIM AN "ASSOCIATE STATE" OF THE UNION. ALTHOUGH PRESS PRONOUNCEMENTS IN THE NAME OF THE "CHINESE PEOPLE" WERE PROBABLY FORESEEN AND DISCOUNTED IN ADVANCE, THE SEPTEMBER 11 FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT APPEARED TO CATCH

NEW DELHI BY SURPRISE. INDIAN OFFICIALS WERE ADDITIONALLY OFFENDED BY THE AD HOMINEM ATTACK IN THE PEOPLE'S DAILY ON MRS. GANDHI. INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS TOLD THE EMBASSY THE PRIME MINISTER HAD NOT BEEN CRITICIZED BY NAME IN PRC PROPAGANDA SINCE THE MIDDLE OF 1969, AND EXPRESSED INDIGNATION THAT THE PRC HAD SOUGHT TO PLAY UP THE ANXIETIES VARIOUSLY FELT BY INDIA'S NEIGHBORS, PARTICULARLY NEPAL. NOT SURPRISINGLY, MRS. GANDHI'S SEPTEMBER 30 MESSAGE TO CHOU EN-LAI ON THE PRC'S TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CONTRASTS MARKEDLY WITH HER GREETING A YEAR AGO. INSTEAD OF "WARM FELICITATIONS AND FRIENDLY GREETINGS"... AND A WISH TO "OUR GREAT NEIGHBOR PEACE, PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY" SHE CONFINED HERSELF TO "GREETINGS AND GOOD WISHES" THIS YEAR. WE UNDERSTAND THE GOI LIMITED ITS OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE AT THE CHINESE NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION OCTOBER 1 TO 4 A SINGLE REPRESENTATIVE.

5. THE PRC'S SHARP REACTION HAS OF COURSE ONLY DEEPENED SUSPICION HERE ABOUT CHINA'S REAL INTENTIONS ALONG THE COUNTRY'S BORDERS. ENDEMIC INSTABILITY IN BANGLADESH, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CHINESE-BANGLADESH RELATIONS FEEDING SUCH INSTABILITY AS WELL AS THE FIRES OF ANTI-INDIAN SENTIMENT; PRESS (AND GOI) ATTENTION TO REPORTS OF CHINESE SUPPORT FOR THE NAGAS AND MIZOS IN NORTHEASTERN INDIA; SUSPICION (OR EVEN CONVICTION) THAT THE CHINESE WERE BEHIND OR AT LEAST ENCOURAGED THE ANTI-INDIAN DEMONSTRATIONS IN NEPAL OVER SIKKIM (CHINESE PROPAGANDA MEDIA PLAYED THE NEPALI STORIES HEAVILY); AND THE EVER-PRESENT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 13214

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

AWARENESS OF SINO-PAKISTANI RELATIONS AND CHINESE MILITARY
SUPPLIES TO PAKISTAN FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN INDIAN THINKING,
AND BITS AND PIECES ALSO SHOW THROUGH IN THE COMMENTS OF VARIOUS
OFFICIALS. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE POTENTIAL CHINESE "MILITARY
THREAT" HAS BEEN GIVEN A FILLIP BY ALL THESE EVENTS., THEREBY
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STRENGTHENING THE LOBBY WITHIN THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT AGAINST
REDUCING THE MILITARY BUDGET AND THE R&D WORD IN WEAPONRY.
AN MEA OFFICER DEALING WITH CHINESE AFFAIRS, WHO SAID HE HAD
BANKED ON A FAVORABLE TURN IN RELATIONS EARLY IN 1975, TOLD AN
EMBASSY OFFICER IN MID-SEPTEMBER THAT AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF
CIVILIZED DIALOGUE WOULD NOW BE REQUIRED TO RESUME A GRADUAL
IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS. ALLUDING TO THE CALCUTTA TABLE TENNIS
TOURNAMENT, HE SAID THAT MOMENTUM COULD NOT SIMPLY BE RESUMED
NOW BY LAUNCHING NEW GOOD WILL GESTURES BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND
INDIAN "COURTS." IF THE CHINESE TEAM NOW COMES AT ALL.

6. THE INDIANS ARE NOT SURE WHY THE CHINESE PERSIST IN A HARD
LINE TOWARD THEM. NOR ARE WE. THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE AT LEAST
AS MUCH LOGIC FOR THE CHINESE TO TRY TO IMPROVE SINO-INDIAN
RELATIONS AND THEREBY COMPLICATE INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS AND
REDUCE THE SOVIET "ENCIRCLEMENT." THE CONCLUSION OF A NUMBER
OF INDIANS IS THAT THE CHINESE PURSUE A POLICY OF ENCOURAGING
SOUTH ASIAN DISSENSION, RIVALRY, AND ANTAGONISM WITH THE VIEW
OF KEEPING THE AREA WEAK AND OF EXPLOITING SUCH WEAKNESS TO
INCREASE CHINESE INFLUENCE IN THE AREA AT THE EXPENSE OF INDIA,
AND LESS DIRECTLY THE SOVIETS.

7. ALTHOUGH SOVIET OFFICIALS HERE ASSERT FOR THE RECORD THAT IMPROVED SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS WOULD POSE NO PROBLEM (I.E., SO FAR AS THE RELATIONSHIP WAS NOT PREDICATED ON ANY ANTI-SOVIET POLICY), THEIR PROPAGANDA EFFORT HERE CONTINUES TO GO TO DRIVING THE WEDGE DEEPER BETWEEN THE TWO ASIAN NEIGHBORS. LOCAL SOVIET INFORMATION (OR DISINFORMATION) MILLS HAVE BEEN OPERATING FULL-BLAST IN RECENT WEEKS TO DISCREDIT THE PRC. A LATE AUGUST NOVOSTI REPORT THAT CHINA WAS DEPLOYING NUCLEAR ROCKETS IN TIBET "WHICH WOULD HURTLE OVER INDIAN TERRITORY IN TEST LAUNCHINGS" FOUND ITS WAY INTO SEVERAL RESPECTABLE PUBLICATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT WAS FORCED TO DENY THE REPORT IN PARLIAMENT, DECLARING THERE WAS "NO AUTHENTIC NEWS" OF SUCH DEPLOYMENTS. AT THE SAME TIME THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO REFUTE A SOVIET PLANTED STORY THAT CHINESE WARSHIPS WERE CONVERGING ON THE INDIAN OCEAN. ALLEGATIONS THAT THE US AND PRC WERE COLLUDING IN SIKKIM ALSO MADE THE LEFTIST PRESS. ALTHOUGH SUCH REPORTS MAY NOT CARRY MUCH WEIGHT WITH THE GOVERNMENT, THE SOVIET INTEREST IN WIDELY DISSEMINATING THEM IS NOT LOST ON THE DECISION MAKERS: THEY GET THE MESSAGE THAT A SINO-INDIAN RAPPROACHMENT

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WOULD NOT BE WELL RECEIVED BY THE SOVIETS. THE SOVIETS ARE ALMOST CERTAINLY PLEASED AT THE BLOW-UP OVER SIKKIM, WHICH SERVES SOVIET INTERESTS IN AROUSING ANEW INDIAN CONCERNS OVER CHINESE INTENTIONS, AND THUS REVIVES IN MANY MINDS HERE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDO-SOVIET TREATY LINK.

8. INDIAN OFFICIALS REMAIN AWARE THAT IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH CHINA WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO AN IMPROVED IMAGE OF INDIA IN THE WEST. AN MEA OFFICIAL RECENTLY TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT THE TASK OF INDIAN DIPLOMATS IN WASHINGTON WOULD BE GREATLY FACILITATED IF THE US PUBLIC AND CONGRESS COULD ONLY BE PERSUADED THAT INDIA STOOD BALANCED BETWEEN THE TWO COMMUNIST POWERS RATHER THAN MARKEDLY INCLINED TOWARDS THE USSR. THERE HAS, HOWEVER, NEVER BEEN MUCH THAT WE COULD DO TO SET SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS ON A MORE NORMAL COURSE AND THE EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BELIEVE (REF A) THAT WHILE WE SHOULD WELCOME SINO-INDIAN DETENTE, OUR ENCOURAGEMENT SHOULD BE PASSIVE, NOT MANIPULATIVE.

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